

## **(Keeping the) Amateur Radio Morse Code Requirement**

Without a doubt, the discussion and debate of eliminating the morse code requirement from amateur radio licensing is more emotional than any other action of our hobby. We've seen a lot of changes over the last ten plus years. We should keep our hobby, a hobby.

Although I respect the attitudes of many, I too, have my own opinion of the proposed changes.

Now as a licensed ham for over 42 years, I've grown a bit tired of being defined as a "dinosaur", "old-timer", or even worse, as someone "not willing to change" as well as many other descriptions offered orally or in written print by petitions or discussions you may have received.

Many can attest to the stress, disappointment, and frustration from learning the morse code, but also satisfaction of the days you felt when you sat before the FCC examiner and being required to pass the morse code requirement before being given the opportunity of taking the written theory session all at one time. Many have gone home at times with the sadness of needing to study more before coming back for my next opportunity to be tested. It's not easy and sometimes right-down embarrassing to admit to others of your failure to pass the test. That may be where some of the fault lies and long line of petitioners who request the rules be changed...perhaps to ease their efforts.

The real challenge is to overcome the failure of not passing the code test is to prove to yourself that you will come back the next time being better prepared.

Perhaps the real intention(s) of those petitions which have been submitted are perhaps trying to upgrade and having a difficult time doing so. I know they say they represent the majority of hams feeling the requirements should be reduced. Most hams that I know don't want the requirements changed and I speak from a background of fielding those kinds of questions/comments from hams across our state.

As we have all seen, many...many changes have been made to every conceivable part of our society. Many things have changed, some easier and some harder, and agreeably in some cases, probably for their betterment - but then again, many have caused deeper deterioration of hobbies and other aspects of life, in both passively and intense situations and involvement.

As we've seen the rules change, from the 1992 rulings, we have seen a decline in licensing and membership among those who once wanted to become hams but for one reason or another, have failed to renew their license even when not desiring to upgrade, but rather, simply lost the interest of our hobby. Sad, but statistically acceptable when you consider other higher priorities in life that should be considered and as it should be. It's a hobby that you can spend a lot of time doing....or not....and yet come back to it if/when priorities change.

Let me give you my best example of becoming licensed. When first becoming licensed in 1963, my dad and older brother were already licensed as Advanced Class Operators. I along with many others before me had one year to upgrade from the Novice license in the progression of becoming a General or be automatically losing my license. I didn't upgrade, and regretted it for many years.

When seeking permission under the new rule of a two-year Novice license back in the early '70's, I requested the FCC reinstate my license should I pass the theory portion of the test. The letter of denial from the FCC was strong saying... "although sympathetic to your request, we regret to inform you that you'll have to be re-tested before being awarded another license."

My point is that because I "wanted" to advance in my pursuits, I did what I had to do.

I think that's what is lacking in today's' hams and perhaps in other hobbies too. They don't want to work or be challenged to do things they feel are not necessary.

That's my point; lets leave the morse code element just as its been for years and years and ask hams who want to progress in their interest and abilities, be afforded to do what others have done before them.

I respectfully request you keep the morse code requirement as it now stands and forever keep the basic requirement of morse code to be as it is now stated for all to know and for future generations of amateur radio operators to know they have shown the technical ability toward becoming licensed to operate.

Sincerely,

Bob Ideker, WB5VUH